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**Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women**

## Statement submitted by Radin Institute for Family Health Education and Promotion, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

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## Statement

## Youth and the Millennium Development Goals: today's investment for future success

According to the *United Nations World Youth Report* in 2007, today's youth group is the best educated youth generation in history and a tremendous resource for national development. Today's young men and women are an evolving generation that sees the future with an optimistic view and a solid commitment to vitalize their societies. The major goal of this statement is to remind all stakeholders that investing in youth is a priority that will provide a long-term and solid platform towards meeting all the Millennium Development Goals.

Any development initiative should provide tangible opportunities for young people to participate in society. Today's young men and women need different tools for a successful and safe transition into independent life and in order to become responsible and productive adult members of their communities. Improving the lives of young people is vital to the implementation of all the Millennium Development Goals, from education and employment to health and gender equity. Young people should not struggle with the poverty, violence and lack of education that destroys their ambition to be part of the success in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Governments and international and national agencies need to ensure that today's youth, regardless of gender, will develop its full potential, be treated equally and have educational experiences that guarantee its success in the future.

Young people are a key asset to eliminating gender disparity. In particular, empowering young women makes them strong partners with men to help promote gender awareness in future generations. Gender inequality is deeply rooted in culture in both the developed and developing world, but young people can be powerful agents of change. Young people recognize that overcoming today's challenges requires equal partnerships between men and women. The empowerment of women is not a theoretical concept; it is a substantial strategy that should be linked to all of the Millennium Development Goals. All Governments should establish specific gender equity tests that are sensitive to youth in all initiatives across all the Millennium Development Goals. Young men need to recognize women as equal partners who can take over non-traditional roles and grow up to become leaders of society.

Targeting young men's involvement in gender equity policies is essential. It requires changes in norms and beliefs in the communities. Therefore, programmes are needed to educate male high school and college students to encourage them to be more involved in family activities. They should be educated about the unfairness of gender inequity. This education should be incorporated into programmes promoting positive images of men in non-traditional roles, teaching them skills related to the domestic activities of the family. The media has an enormous role in establishing social norms and beliefs. Thus, gender stereotypes should be replaced by images with positive messages, such as promoting positive young male and female role models around family life and showing both parents being active in family caregiving and domestic work.

Young people are a valuable source of social capital for development to 2015 and beyond. Without recognizing this reality, all actions to implement the Millennium Development Goals will be inefficient and the outcome will be temporary and volatile.